United Nations S/2016/966

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 November 2016
English
Original: French

Letter dated 10 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, during its Presidency of the Security Council in November 2016, Senegal plans to organize, on 18 November at 10 a.m., a debate on the topic: "Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security".

Please find attached a concept paper concerning this meeting (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fodé **Seck**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-19988 (E) 161116 161116

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 10 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Debate of the Security Council on strengthening the United Nations-African Union partnership in peace and security, 18 November 2016

Concept note

Introduction

During the past decade, several frameworks and mechanisms have been established to strengthen United Nations-African Union cooperation.

In 2007, the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union began holding annual joint consultative meetings. In their first joint communiqué (S/2007/421 and Corr.1, annex II), the two bodies committed themselves to developing a stronger and more structured relationship and underlined the importance of support for the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture and its pillars.

The Security Council continues to play a critical role in expanding and institutionalizing the United Nations partnership with the African Union Peace and Security Council. It has convened a number of high-level debates and other sessions and has committed itself through many resolutions and declarations to finding ways to better coordinate and strengthen the partnership.

In December 2014, in a statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2014/27), the Council requested the Secretary-General to present an annual report on ways to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on peace and security in Africa, including the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU). The first such report (S/2016/780) has been issued and will be considered during the debate. Two other key reports related to the partnership were also issued recently: the report of the African Union High Representative for the Peace Fund, Donald Kaberuka, on financing the African Union and the African Peace Fund, entitled "Securing predictable and sustainable financing for peace in Africa", and the report of the joint African Union-United Nations review of available mechanisms to finance and support African Union peace support operations authorized by the United Nations Security Council (see S/2016/809).

Objectives of the debate

The basis for a more effective strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations is close political engagement that starts early and is comprehensive and sustained throughout the conflict cycle. The United Nations and the African Union should foster a common understanding of threats to peace and security in Africa and work together to address them jointly to promote unity of purpose and effort throughout the conflict cycle, based on the principles of comparative advantage and value addition. Although there is recognition of the

potential for and sometimes the reality of greater cooperation between the African Union and its regional economic communities/regional mechanisms and the United Nations, the real challenge involves progressing from an ad hoc approach towards more predictable, consistent and reliable arrangements.

The scale and complexity of contemporary conflict, and the suffering that it creates, threaten the international order. There is an urgent need for new and stronger ways to address international peace and security challenges. Stronger partnerships with regional organizations, particularly with the African Union, can enable the United Nations to respond early, quickly, coherently and decisively to prevent and manage conflict. In 2015, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, in its report (see S/2015/446), called for deepening United Nations-African Union partnership and proposed that the United Nations take the decisive step of investing in and committing to the success of the African Union as a partner in addressing shared concerns. It also espoused the principles of early engagement, ongoing consultation, common understanding of conflicts, joint planning and an integrated approach throughout the conflict cycle.

The Panel also recommended more support to African Union peacekeeping operations approved by the Security Council and called for more predictable funding for African Union peace support operations. It emphasized the need for a partnership to be grounded on a clear division of labour based on respective comparative advantages, transparency, accountability and respect for international norms and standards.

In document S/PRST/2014/27, the Security Council recognized that one major constraint facing the African Union in effectively carrying out the mandate of maintaining regional peace and security was securing predictable, sustainable and flexible resources.

This debate should generate renewed momentum for strengthening peace and security cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security.

The objectives of the debate are therefore to:

(a) Mobilize the Security Council's political support and commitment to further strengthening the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union;

(b) Support efforts to build effective mechanisms and frameworks that will promote a stronger United Nations-African Union partnership in peace and security, including building on the current momentum towards ensuring predictable, flexible and sustainable support and financing for African Union peace operations;

(c) Generate further support and commitment for the United Nations-African Union partnership in all its aspects, particularly greater collaboration between the two Councils, and between the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission, in promoting early engagement for conflict prevention and mediation, as well as developing joint approaches to peacekeeping and peacebuilding and supporting the work of UNOAU;

(d) Strengthen UNOAU to serve as a key driver of consolidation of African Union-United Nations partnership.

Context

The report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of UNOAU (S/2016/780), outlines the collaborative efforts of the United Nations and the African Union to address threats to peace and security in Africa. It reinforces the message in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations" (S/2015/682), that significant progress has been made in institutionalizing United Nations cooperation with regional organizations, including the African Union. It also recognizes that the peace and security responsibilities shouldered by the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms in Africa have increased in recent years. That trend is highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and African Union. The growing demands on the partnership require the two organizations to transition from ad hoc cooperation and a series of joint interventions towards a more structured and predictable strategic partnership.

The United Nations and the African Union have developed a number of frameworks and mechanisms to institutionalize their partnership in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. For example, in 2006, a declaration entitled "Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union" (A/61/630, annex) was adopted in Addis Ababa. Through the Programme, the United Nations pledged to help to strengthen the African Union Commission, focusing on conflict prevention, mediation, good offices, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Programme comes to an end in 2016. Its proposed successor, the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda, proposes a new relationship between the United Nations and the African Union based on shared values and principles, a strategic partnership that has the ability to catalyse change towards the attainment of Africa's objectives of integration, development, peace and security and governance, and proactive, rather than reactive, engagement in the social, economic, political and security fields.

The commitment to strengthen cooperation and establish a more effective relationship at the strategic level was repeatedly expressed throughout the past decade in a series of resolutions of and statements by the Security Council (S/PRST/2007/7, Council resolution 1809 (2008), S/PRST/2009/3, S/PRST/2009/26) and a resolution of the General Assembly (Assembly resolution 63/310). In 2007, the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council began holding annual joint consultative meetings that have increased collaboration and coordination between the two Councils. In their first joint communiqué (S/2007/421 and Corr.1, annex II), the two Councils committed to developing a stronger and more structured relationship and underlined the importance of support for the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture and its pillars. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/296, requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Secretariat to meet the special needs of Africa. In 2010, the establishment of UNOAU marked an important step in advancing the partnership. The Office, headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General, serves as the conduit and facilitator for

promoting structured and strategic engagement with the African Union on peace and security. It is imperative that the rise in demands on the partnership be matched by adequate resources in order to fully optimize the opportunities for both organizations to effectively manage threats to peace and security in Africa.

Questions for debate

- How can the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission develop joint approaches on conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding?
- What are the appropriate modalities for predictable, flexible and sustainable financing for African Union prevention efforts and peace support operations?
- How can the relations between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security be better promoted as a strategic partnership based on a division of labour and burden sharing?
- What concrete joint actions and initiatives can the two Councils jointly undertake in 2017 to further advance that partnership?

Meeting format

The debate will be held in the Security Council Chamber on 18 November 2016 at 10 a.m. and will be opened to regional organizations. The debate will be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, Mankeur Ndiaye.

Briefers

- Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security
- Haile Menkerios, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of UNOAU
- Donald Kaberuka, African Union High Representative for the Peace Fund

Outcome

The President will engage with the Security Council members with a view to adopting a resolution on that occasion.